

Story 1734 (1994 Tape 1)

Narrator: Cevdet Uğuz,
veterinarian

Location: Taşkale village,
Karaman (provincial
capital but
formerly kaza
merkezi), Karaman
Province

Date: May 1994

Dietary Retribution

A German asked a Turk, "How do you prepare a watermelon so that it is suitable to eat?"

The Turk started to answer this question by saying, "First you must cut a hole in the watermelon. Then you have to scoop out all of the red interior of the melon. When he was sure that the German understood this, he went on: "Then you should pour some bulgur¹ through the hole and stuff the melon as if it were a dolma.² After that you should place it in the oven and bake it for a while before eating it."

After the German had left, a second Turk asked the

¹Bulgur is made of wheat that has been boiled, dehusked by pounding, and ground into a coarse powder. Because it has been already cooked, bulgur can quickly be made edible simply by stirring it into hot water--a kind of Turkish instant cereal.

²A dolma is a vegetable shell (usually grape leaves or a green pepper) stuffed with rice and ground meat. After being cooked, it may be served hot or cold.

Story 1734

first one, "Why did you tell such nonsense to that poor man who asked you for information?"

first Turk answered, "Oh, what I did was a lot kinder than I should have been! When I first came here to Germany to work, I could not understand German at all, and that fellow gave me a can of dog food to eat."³

³There were several hundred thousand Turkish laborers and their families in Germany during the latter half of the twentieth century. They often experienced problems of acculturation. Although they were needed in Germany and invited there by the German government, these laborers were often treated intolerantly and unkindly. This anecdote reflects some of the intercultural friction.